

New Hampshire Special Education

Onsite Evaluation Report

Final Copy

School Administrative Unit # 44

Evaluation conducted on October 18-19, 1995

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New Hampshire Special Education Onsite Evaluation Report

I. Introduction:

II. Status of Corrective Actions from previous on-site:

III. Issues of Significance:

IV: Citations to the New Hampshire State Standards for Special Education:
(Commendations, Citations, and Suggestions per school)

Note: It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.

SAU # 44

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Special Education On-Site Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU # 44 comprised of the following schools: Barrington Elementary School, Barrington Middle School and Annex, Northwood School, Nottingham Elementary School, Strafford School, and the SAU #44 preschool special needs program. The on-site team met on October 18-19, 1995 in order to review the status of Special Education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation include the close review of all the teaching certifications of Special Education Staff, analyzing of SPEDIS data, a James O. compliance review, random inspection of student records and review of parent and teacher surveys. Interviews were held with the Superintendent, Special Education Director, building principals, regular and special education teachers, parents and related service personnel, as time and availability permitted. Throughout the visit the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report which you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of your on-site team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the N.H. State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no exceptions to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: December 1992

The staff of SAU #44 have worked hard to address areas on noncompliance that were noted in the 1992 report. Since the last on-site visitation, all of the forms associated with the special education process have been re-designed to meet compliance with state standards and within each district in the SAU much has been done to improve and refine special education practices. The visiting team determined that most of the previous citations related to the special education process and paperwork compliance have been resolved. Specifically, the on-site team found that the IEP format now meets compliance and that in each school there has been improved record keeping and file organization. The team further noted that extended school year programming is being considered for educationally disabled students and there is consistent documentation in student records that least restrictive environment is determined annually.

The only citation that continues to warrant attention relates to special education curriculum for self contained programs or programming that is not a modification of the regular education curricula. The team determined that for those programs identified as self contained, there is no specialized curriculum. As each district moves toward provision of services for the more severely disabled children within the SAU, it will be important that there be a curricula available for staff to utilize when developing individualized programming.

Overall, SAU #44 has made significant gains in addressing the citations of the previous on-site and staff are commended for their accomplishments. It was the consensus of the visiting team that most all areas of noncompliance have been addressed, and much hard work has been put forth by staff to ensure the quality and degree of compliance found in each school. Their efforts are well recognized.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

In a variety of ways, SAU #44 offers a wide array of quality programming for students with special needs. Throughout the SAU special education is becoming more of an integral part of the overall programming, and there is a supportive atmosphere for provision of services in the least restrictive environment. Staff were consistently described as skilled and dedicated individuals who work hard to provide quality instruction for all students.

There are many praiseworthy things happening in SAU #44 and there were no pervasive problems or issues of significance identified by the visiting team. The on-site unanimously agreed that most of the citations that appear in the report that follows are due mainly to oversights and errors in policy and procedure rather than a specific chronic problem. The SAU is encouraged to monitor such errors as even minor oversights in paperwork compliance could have serious implications upon the educationally disabled child and/or the SAU.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU WIDE

COMMENDATIONS:

Throughout the SAU there is a spirit of cooperation, teamwork and an open line of communication among all staff.

Within each building in the SAU there is an atmosphere that encourages the provision of services to all students in the least restrictive environment.

The director of special education is knowledgeable, involved in all aspects of the programming and he is well respected by staff, colleagues and parents.

Parents interviewed and surveyed were supportive, involved and pleased with the quality of services made available to students.

The model of having one special educator within each building act as the coordinator for the special education process is working well.

All staff in the SAU have worked hard to resolve issues of noncompliance listed in the 1992 on-site report.

The staff in each building were consistently described as highly motivated and dedicated to the teaching/learning process.

Throughout the SAU student records were well organized, comprehensive, user friendly and contained most of the required documentation as outlined in the NH State Standards.

CITATIONS:

ED #1119.03(c)

Curricula

For programs that are classified as self contained or not a modification of the regular education program, there must be a written curricula available.

ED # 1129.01

Local Education Agency Application

The local special education plan needs to be revised and updated to fully and accurately describe policy. The existing childfind policy, confidentiality, description of services and procedures to obtain a surrogate parent all need revisions

ED #1119.07(a)

Qualifications of Staff

One special education teacher currently holds no certification in the state of NH. One individual who is providing direct speech and language services to disabled students holds no licensure and is not regularly supervised by a speech therapist.

SUGGESTIONS:

The SAU is strongly encouraged to continue with the implementation of Child Study Teams and keeping documentation of strategies, modifications, adaptations that are made for students prior to making a referral to the special education team.

The on-site team recommends that SAU #44 consider provision of inservice training and professional growth opportunities for paraprofessionals. It is suggested that the SAU contact the NH Dept. of Education regarding planned training sessions that may be offered to paraprofessionals during the 95-96 school year by the N.H.D.O.E.

The SAU needs to update/revise the Local Special Education Plan and the team suggests that the SAU contact the N.H.D.O.E. to obtain a copy of a "model" plan that meets compliance with state standards.

The on-site team suggests that special educators in SAU #44 be encouraged to obtain endorsements in EH as there is currently only one teacher in the SAU who holds these credentials.

It was the consensus of the visiting team that there should be more professional growth opportunities made available to all staff in the SAU. This will be necessary if the inclusion model is to be successfully implemented in each school. All staff will need to have a sound knowledge of how to meet the individual needs of all students through their varied learning styles and training should include instructional strategies, supervision of paraprofessionals, modifying and adapting curriculum, team teaching, interdisciplinary teaching etc.

According to surveys completed by parents of special needs students in SAU #44, there is a need to assist parents in better understanding how their children's disability effects learning. It might be beneficial to explore possible ways in which awareness sessions could be made available to parents.

The visiting team strongly suggests that each school take a critical look at planning time made available to all staff. The team suggests that each school explore creative ways in which teachers could have common planning time.

The SAU may want to take a critical look at existing programming/services which currently address the needs of those students with challenging behaviors. Staff appear to need more support and training in how to effectively deal with such students in the regular education setting.

SCHOOL: Out-of-District Files - SAU Wide

PROGRAM(S):

SPEEDS # OF FILES: 1) 515620 2) 393108

COMMENDATIONS:

- The special education director maintains regular communication with receiving schools.
- The number of students placed out-of-district is minimal.

CITATIONS:

| | |
|---|--|
| <u>ED # 1107.03(i)</u> | 1 file: out of compliance as no medical evaluation had been received by M.D. |
| <u>ED # 1107.06(a,b)</u> | 1 file: missing written evaluation summary report. |
| <u>ED # 1123.05(a,b)</u> | 1 file: parent did not sign indicating rights were received. |
| <u>ED # 1113.01(a-c)</u> | 1 file: no evidence of vocational evaluation when vocational experiences were a part of IEP. |
| <u>ED # 1109.01(e)</u> | 1 file: IEP had no vocational component when child was completing vocational experiences in community. |
| <u>ED # 1109.01(f)</u> | Same IEP lacked counseling component. |
| <u>ED # 1109.01(i)</u> | 1 IEP had no goals/objectives at all - just modifications - student IEP called for speech/language. |
| <u>ED #1109.01(L)</u> <u>ED #1102.35</u> | 1 IEP (student, aged 16) did not have transition component. |
| <u>ED #1109.11(a,b)</u> | 1 file did not have evidence of regular monitoring of IEP. |

SUGGESTIONS: None

SCHOOL: SAU #44 Preschool

PROGRAM(S): Special Needs

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 548350

COMMENDATIONS:

- Files are comprehensive and well organized.
- Staff are skilled, dedicated and child centered.

CITATIONS: None

SUGGESTIONS:

- The special needs program needs to have improved space for instruction and activities.
- The on-site team suggests that there be more typical children involved in the program.

SCHOOL: Barrington Elementary

PROGRAM(S):

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 535608 2) 542347 3) 557273 4) 535681
 5) 528019 6) 528832 7) 557274

COMMENDATIONS:

- The facility is spacious and a wonderful learning environment.
- Positive team attitude is evident at Barrington Elem.
- Team meetings on a regular basis are commendable.
- Student Assistance Program and Family Counseling onsite are commended.
- Efforts toward inclusionary practices are evident.
- Computer lab is exceptional.
- IEP's well written.
- Teachers are creative and enthusiastic.

CITATIONS:

ED # 1107.02(b,d) Special education referrals were often unavailable or missing.

ED # 1123.05(a,b) Evidence of parental rights often missing.

ED # 1109.03(b) Service providers did not attend IEP meeting.

ED # 1109.11(a,b) Progress on IEP's not consistently mentioned.

ED # 1111.01(a-f) Consideration of extended school year was not always evident.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Develop a progress note form so you can write more accurate measurable goals.
- Include copies of notices/invites to meetings in student files.
- Short term goals should be written by all service providers if listed on the ASP.
- Develop a written modification form to be included with the IEP.

SCHOOL: Strafford School

PROGRAM(S): Resource Room/Inclusive Classrooms

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 528024 2) 557244 3) 548354 4) 542358

COMMENDATIONS:

- The school is a very positive environment for students.
- Students are well included in classrooms.
- Staff challenges themselves to improve service delivery and work as teams.
- Good team problem solving concerning challenging and unique students.
- Excellent utilization of support staff.
- Very cohesive staff.
- Staff has good awareness of each other's skills and knowledge.
- Lots of collaboration is evident between special education staff members.
- Quiet, pleasant environment is evident at Strafford School.

CITATIONS:

- ED # 1107.02(b,d) 1 file: No referral form to parent; no 15 day notice.
- ED # 1125.04(a) 1 file: No written consent to evaluate.
- ED # 1107.03(a-k) 1 file: No multi disciplinary team or current evaluation.
- ED # 1107.05(a) Appropriately qualified examiner is not evident.
- ED # 1107.05(k) 3 files: Evaluation not completed within 45 days. Extension not signed by parent.
- ED # 1107.07(c) 3 files: Team composition not appropriate, special education teacher plays two roles: team member and LEA rep.
- ED # 1109.04(a) 4 files: 10 day written notice of IEP meeting is not on record.
- ED # 1109.11(a,b) 4 files: Lacked regular systematic monitoring of IEP.
- ED # 1107.08(d) 3 files: Written report is missing.
- ED # 1107.08(a,c,d) 1 file: No record of observations, written report, teacher of suspected disability at the meeting.

SCHOOL: Strafford School (con't)

SUGGESTIONS:

- Information flow from SAU to the school based special education staff should be more complete. Staff indicated information missing from files is at SAU office.
- Summer program follow through should be more systematic. Currently the SAU is responsible since school staff does not work in the summer.
- Time for meetings is definitely a problem. The staff may need assistance in determining how best to improve this.

SCHOOL: Barrington Middle School Annex

PROGRAM(S): Modified regular class with flexible pullout

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 512049 2) 535685

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is a clear effort to involve parents - including repeated mailings and even certified mail.
- There is a definite reflection of team effort to make decisions seen in minutes of meetings.
- Overall, this school has gone through a dramatic change in service delivery with minimal friction among staff. They appreciate and respect each other, and appreciate the school board's and administration's support with additional staff and inservice.

CITATIONS:

ED # 1107.02(d) 2 files: Did not have written notification of referral within 15 days.

ED # 1107.05(k) 1 file: Evaluation not completed in 45 days.

ED # 1109.11(a,b) 2 files: No consistent IEP progress monitoring found.

SUGGESTIONS: None

SCHOOL: Barrington Middle School

PROGRAM(S): All modified regular class, with flexible pullout available.

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 548349 2) 548290

COMMENDATIONS:

- The special education forms are clear and include all the components required by law.
- Despite the fact that middle school aged students have a lot of accumulated information in their files, the files are arranged neatly, chronologically, and important information is easily located.
- Parents and classroom teachers are very involved in team decision making.
- Overall, this school has gone through a dramatic change in service delivery with minimal friction among staff. They appreciate and respect each other and appreciate the school board's and administration's support with additional staff and inservice.

CITATIONS:

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|---|--|
| <u>ED # 1107.03(f)</u> <u>ED #1107.07(c)</u> | 1 file: Did not have L.D. certified teacher on evaluation team for L.D. identification. |
| <u>ED # 1107.05(k)</u> | 1 file: Had two extensions signed, each for an unspecified number of days, because of a waiting list for psychological services. |
| <u>ED # 1107.06(a,b)</u> | 1 file: Had no summary report. |
| <u>ED # 1109.03(b-1)</u> | 2 files: Had no individual designated as just LEA representative. |
| <u>ED # 1109.04(a)</u> | 2 files: Had no written notice of meetings. |
| <u>ED # 1109.11(a,b)</u> | 2 files: Did not have evidence of monitoring of progress on IEP's. |

SUGGESTIONS: None

SCHOOL: Nottingham

PROGRAM(S): Resource Room

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 557258 2) 535671 3) 528030 4) 524633
5) 557250 6) 524702

COMMENDATIONS:

- Special Education forms are clear, user friendly and meet compliance.
- Staff and administration were very welcoming and accommodating to the on-site team.
- IEP's were very comprehensive.

CITATIONS:

ED # 1107.03(a) 1 file: Qualified examiner for L.D. was not present at team meeting.

ED # 1107.07(c) 2 files: Teacher/qualified examiner not appropriate for team. LEA representative not present.

ED #1129.05(e) 1 file: ASP not signed for current school year.

ED #1109.02(d) 1 file: IEP not in effect by October 1, 1995 as documented by parental letter.

SUGGESTIONS: It would be helpful to organize files so that information could be accessed more readily.

SCHOOL: Northwood School

PROGRAM(S): Resource, self-contained, regular

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 535663 2) 478347

COMMENDATIONS:

- New forms are much improved.
- Files are in good order/well organized.
- Staff supports inclusion/hard working.
- SPED Coordinator is highly respected and viewed as essential to program success.
- Staff feel well supported by new principal.
- The facility is nice, staff are positive, and learning atmosphere is very positive.
- Guidance staff is used for crisis intervention.
- APE program is supplementary to regular P.E.
- Student/Staff ratio is adequate.
- Problem solving via per mediation/class meetings is commendable.

CITATIONS:

ED # 1107.05(k) 1 file: Missed 45 day deadline for evaluation team meeting.

ED #1107.08 (a1, c, d1-7) 1 file: Held L.D. evaluation team without regular education teacher, without observation, without report signed by all team members report missing parts A, B, C, D.

ED #1109.04(a) 1 file: Missing 10 day notice of IEP meeting.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Secretarial support for special education coordinators is needed.
- Staff appear to be unclear about philosophy/goals of special education for the SAU and the school, more direction/goal setting is suggested.
- Consult/planning time is needed.
- Training for staff/aides is recommended.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

PROGRAM APPROVAL

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. COMPLIANCE REVIEW

SAU #44

SAU #44
James O. Compliance Review Summary
Appendix B, F, E

CITATIONS:

| | |
|--|--|
| <u>ED #1107.02(b)</u> <u>ED #1103.02(d)</u> | No evidence in record of written referral. |
| <u>ED #1107.02(d)</u> | No written consent to evaluate. |
| <u>ED #1107.03(a)</u> | No evidence that evaluation team was multidisciplinary. |
| <u>ED #1107.05(k)</u> | Unable to determine if evaluation was completed within 45 days - no permission to evaluate. |
| <u>ED #1107.06(a,c)</u> | No evidence of evaluation summary. |
| <u>ED #1107.08(a,d)</u> | No evidence of any criteria met for determination of secondary L.D. code. |
| <u>ED #1123.05(a,b)</u> | No evidence of annual notification of parental rights. |
| <u>ED #1109.01</u> <u>34CFR 300.307</u> | IEP does not have any indication of meeting requirements of minimum State Standards (art, music, P.E., science, library media, etc.) |
| <u>ED #1123.03(a,b)</u> | No evidence of W.P.N. |
| <u>ED #1129.05(a)(8)</u> | A.S.P. is not signed by parent. |
| <u>ED #1130.03(d,e)</u> | No evidence that the LEA team convened. |
| <u>ED #1130.03(g)</u> | No evidence that team provided parent with W.P.N. |
| <u>ED #1130.04(a-c)</u> | No evidence of emergency meeting held. |
| <u>ED #1130.11</u> | LEA Policy related to surrogate parents out-of-date. |

SUGGESTIONS: None